

Welcome

The Ervin and Irene Sieracki family is a result of two waves of immigration from Europe, one Polish and one French.



Map: Wikimedia Commons

The Sieracki family emigrated from Wiele, a village in the Kashubian region in northern Poland. They were part of the great Kashubian migration in the 1870s from Kashubia to America. Germany, or Prussia as it was called then, controlled the Kashubian region, and the policy of Bismarck, the German Chancellor, was to unify Germany both politically and culturally. Bismarck waged a ruthless campaign to squeeze the life out of Polish communities in favor of German citizens. Large German farming estates left little arable land for Kashubians. Only German was to be used in churches, schools and public business. Kashubian men were subject to the draft, which was often akin to the death sentence. My great-grandfather's brother served 15 years in the Prussian army. Kashubian Immigrants to Winona in the 1860s were sending back home reports of job opportunities, good farmland, and religious freedom. In 1870s, my great-great grandmother Marianna Sieracki emigrated with her daughter Julianna, and sons Joseph (my great-grandfather) and Franciszek. By 1900 about 4000 people of Kashubian heritage lived in Winona.



Map: Steven Frich/Canadian Geographic

In the latter half of the 17th Century, King Louis XIV saw that the French settlements were not keeping pace with the British to the south so he sent soldiers to New France to protect the settlements and then sent women called King's Daughters to begin the tradition of big families. My mother's ancestors, which include both soldiers and King's daughters, emigrated from France to Sorel and Three Rivers, towns lying between Montreal and Quebec. Two centuries later, the families of my mother's parents left Canada for a more prosperous life in Hugo, Minnesota.

This website offers my perspective on the most intriguing aspects of the history and culture of the family, and the reader is invited to rummage through the “Sieracki Attic” in the hope of finding interesting family memorabilia.